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*IN MEMORIAM*

JOSEPH S. RILEY.

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*BY ORDER*

PHŒNIX LODGE, No. 130,

*A. Y. M.*

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## *In Memoriam.*

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THE Angel of death has again been permitted to enter our midst, and to summon thence one of our most estimable and honored companions.

Not *this time* has the blow fallen upon the young and aspiring, urging his way onward in the prime and vigor of life, but on one long past the boundary allotted to man, and who having nobly used the talents committed to his keeping, fulfilling with sublime faith and courage all the duties which a long and active career devolved upon him, has passed to his final rest in the calmness of a gentle spirit, and with the quiet resignation and serenity of a Christian.

Our deceased brother JOSEPH S. RILEY, was born in this city on the seventeenth day of October, 1789.

He received, as was common in those early days, with the youth of his class, a sound English education, which well fitted him for the varied positions he was destined to fill during an active and laborious life.



After completing his education he learned the trade of a currier, which business he afterwards carried on for his own account with varied success for many years.

He subsequently engaged in the produce commission business, which he conducted with unusual sagacity and profit for a number of years.

Outside of his legitimate business, which he always attended to with scrupulous exactness and promptitude, he was zealously active in every department of life which claimed his attention, and which was promotive of the public good.

He joined in the defence of his country in the war of 1812, and became a conspicuous leader in the military organizations of his day.

He organized the first temperance society of this Commonwealth as far back as 1832, and was ever after a strict adherent to the principles which he labored manfully to establish.

He filled many responsible positions of honor and profit, public as well as private, in all of which he displayed a marked fidelity and zeal, which were native elements of his character, and it is the crowning glory of his life that so many and varied interests having been committed to his keeping, he discharged the duties appertaining to them all with unimpeachable



integrity, and that no blot or stain of dishonor has ever attached to his name.

In early manhood he connected himself with the Church, and from thence forward throughout his long life he was a consistent and unostentatious member of her communion, zealous in the maintenance of her doctrine and worship but at the same time tolerant and charitable regarding the opinions of all those with whom he differed.

His religion was of the heart, pure and undefiled, and he nobly illustrated it in his daily intercourse with the world, by the simplicity of his life and the purity of his action.

But it is as a Mason that we are most interested in contemplating the character of our deceased brother; and regarded in this light, what a study does it present for our consideration, as we go back in memory, and recall the untiring force and energy with which, having deliberately chosen his course, he strode forward in the toilsome path of duty; and how our admiration is excited at the unselfish manner in which he devoted himself to the highest and best interests of his Order.

Entering the society in the freshness of youth, when the mind and heart are most susceptible of vivid impressions, the lessons he then learned were interwoven with the very texture of his being; and from

that time forward to the close of his career, he continued with unshaken fidelity to minister at its altar, and to vindicate by his life and conversation its claims to the respect and confidence of mankind.

So immovably steadfast and firm was he in all that had relation to his conceptions of duty, that for upwards of a half a century he never omitted, in a single instance, being present at a stated meeting of his Lodge, and that too, in the dark days when it frequently happened that not more than three members had the courage to make their appearance; a circumstance which of itself is highly significant, and which will scarcely apply, it is believed, to any other living Mason.

He was not endowed with any extraordinary talent, nor had he any pretension to greatness as the world knows it; but his manhood was of the truest and best type, and judged by the severest standard of morals, he had but few equals.

There have been far more brilliant and learned names inscribed on the rolls of the Order, who in the pride of their position have paid tribute to its worth, and by their intellectual efforts have exalted its renown; but in the development of the principles which render the institution a benefit and a blessing to mankind, our departed brother was more than the peer

of them all, and as an unwavering and devotedly practical Free Mason, it is safe to say he had no superior.

Brother JOSEPH S. RILEY was initiated in Number 52, April 13, 1811, receiving the degrees of Fellow-Craft and Master in due course.

He became a member of PHOENIX LODGE, No. 130, in June, 1811, within a few weeks after its institution, and was elected Master in June 1816, serving the usual time with merited distinction and with great satisfaction to the brethren.

He was elected Treasurer of the Lodge December, 1817, which position he filled with the utmost precision and vigilance up to the eighteenth day of December, 1872, embracing a period of fifty-five years, when the infirmities of age compelled him to resign.

He was equally conspicuous in other branches of the Order, and for many years was the Secretary of Harmony Royal Arch Chapter, of which he was one of the founders.

He served through every grade of Royal Arch Masonry up to that of Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter.

Faithful in all, and true to the last; ever prompt and bold in maintaining the right, and never shrinking from any responsibility which devolved upon him.



He died on the twenty-seventh of August, 1875, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, surrounded by those who watched over and cared for him, in peace and charity with all, and in the comfortable and holy hope of a blessed immortality.

This is the simple story of a life which will be long remembered for its unexampled force and purity, and which will remain on record in the archives of the Society, as an impelling incentive to all good deeds, and as a beacon to guide the unwary and reckless in the path of duty.

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I SAW an aged man upon his bier,  
His hair was thin and white, and on his brow  
A record of the cares of many a year;  
Cares that were ended and forgotten now;  
And there was sadness round, and faces bowed,  
And woman's tears fell fast, and children wailed aloud.

Then rose another hoary man and said,  
In faltering accents, to that weeping train,  
Why mourn ye that our aged friend is dead?  
Ye are not sad to see the gathered grain,  
Nor when the mellow fruit the orchard cast,  
Nor when the yellow woods shake down the ripened mast.

Ye sigh not when the sun, his course fulfilled,  
His glorious course, rejoicing earth and sky,  
In the soft evening when the winds are stilled,  
Sinks where his islands of refreshment lie;  
And leaves the smile of his departure spread  
O'er the warm colored heaven and ruddy mountain head.

Why weep ye then for him, who, having won  
The bound of man's appointed years at last,  
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labors done,  
Serenely to his final rest has passed;  
While the soft memory of his virtues yet,  
Lingers like twilight hues when the bright sun is set?

His youth was innocent; his riper age,  
Marked with some act of goodness every day;  
And watched by eyes that loved him, calm and sage,  
Faded his late declining years away;  
Cheerful he gave his being up, and went  
To share the holy rest that waits a life well spent.

That life was happy; every day he gave  
Thanks for the fair existence that was his;  
For a sick fancy made him not her slave,  
To mock him with her phantom miseries;  
No chronic tortures racked his aged limb,  
For luxury and sloth had nourished none for him.

And I am glad that he has lived thus long,  
And glad that he has gone to his reward,  
Nor deem that kindly nature did him wrong,  
Softly to disengage the vital cord;  
When his weak hand grew palsied, and his eye  
Dark with the mists of age, it was his time to die.





